THE WILL TO WIN!

WOMEN & SELF DEFENSE

"If there was a magic bullet, the perfect weapon for a woman, or any other 'perfect' mode of feminine self defense, it would be worthless without the woman's determination to preserve her life and well being at the expense, if necessary, of her assailants life."

-Gila May-Hayes

Before we start to discuss how women should start to protect themselves, we must first establish the will to fight. We have been socialized to believe that we are not capable of fighting off a lethal assault. It is ridiculous that there are so many counseling and support organizations for women who have been raped, attacked, and abused but hardly any that work to prepare and prevent these things from happening. We must refuse to be victims and reject the idea that we should submit to our assailants to keep from arousing further violence. In reality, submitting to our assailants will only contribute to future violence against others. You stand a risk of being hurt if you do fight back but you will definitely be hurt if you don't. We must not only resist for our own preservation but also as our social duty to others.

THE COLOR CODES OF READINESS

Condition White- State of unreadiness, you're completely oblivious to your surroundings, the perfect target for a predator looking for his next victim. You never want someone to catch you in condition white.

Condition Yellow- In condition yellow you are relaxed but very aware of your surroundings. You notice if anything is unusual or out of place. If anyone is planning on attacking you, they will not catch you off guard. This is the condition you should be in most of the time. The only time you should fall into condition white is when you're asleep. It's easy to shift from condition yellow to orange but it's nearly impossible to go from condition white to orange.

"Alertness is, to some extent, an inherent personality trait, but it can nonetheless be learned and improved."

-Jeff Cooper

Condition Orange- You're very alert. You've just noticed a possible danger and you have begun developing a tactical plan. You realize you may have to shoot to defend yourself, and can easily shift into condition red.

Condition Red- Shifting from condition orange to condition red depends on the attacker. You realize the threat, have a plan, and if s/he makes a move you do what you have to do. When the attacker makes any aggressive action towards you, you are justified in using deadly force against him/her.

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It's important to remember that even if you don't carry a gun you should still follow the color codes. If you're walking down the street, mindful of your surroundings, and someone attacks you and you use any means to defend yourself, you have followed the color codes. You were alert to your surroundings (condition yellow). You were perceptive to a possible threat (condition orange). You took action to defend yourself (condition red).

As women, we must first overcome the idea that we are physically inadequate to fight back against a male adversary. Women have two arms and two legs and a brain. The only thing we really lack is the will to win. We shall resent fear and embrace anger that someone dare attempt to violate us. Through this anger, harness the aggression to annihilate our enemies.

Why the handgun?

Carrying a handgun is not for everyone. Certainly the principles we've covered thus far can apply to anyone who's willing to fight back in any way. It may be physical. It may be with improvised weapons. It may be with a shotgun by your bed. But understand that the handgun is the ultimate equalizer! When it comes to the handgun, mindset and skill are what matters and for this gender has no bias.

> ***"Guns are the only weapons that put a physically small or weak person at parity with a powerful, very possibly armed, criminal."*** **-Massad Ayoob**

Self motivation

There are more men involved in self defense training, so chances are, you'll start out learning from a man. It's important for everyone to train together to build team work, but don't become dependent on anyone else to lead you or motivate you. Train on your own when you can. We need to develop more women leaders. With other types of self defense training, such as martial arts, men may have the advantage due to the difference in size and strength. But with firearms training, we're all equal. With proper training any woman can perform as well with a handgun as any man.

THE 4 MAIN SAFETY RULES:

1. All guns are always loaded. Never assume that one is not. Never take anyone's word for it. You don't know until you check it. Even when you see that it is unloaded, treat it as if it were, this builds good practice.

2. Never let the muzzle point at anything you're not willing to destroy (loaded or unloaded, always follow this rule).

3. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on target. This is one rule that a lot of beginners have a hard time with and is also important to perform even unloaded.

4. Be sure of your target and what's beyond. Identify the threat before you shoot.

You're not going to become an expert over night. It's going to take a lot of hard work and dedi-

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cation. If you don't get something right away don't become discouraged. Take it step by step and learn the basics first.

The first thing you should be thinking about is safety. Follow the four main safety rules listed to the left at all times... always, no matter what. Make performing them become habitual, like second nature. They are important to know and practice. Also, you will find that any negligent discharge (unintentional firing of the weapon) occurs when at least one of the first three rules were being broken. Following these rules will leave you and everyone around you safer. Think of them every time you handle a firearm, and teach them to others. Once you learn how to handle a gun properly and safely, then you can start worrying about hitting the target.

Beginning to train

When you start training, find a gun that is comfortable to you. If your hands are small you might have a hard time with some handguns. If you know someone with guns, try them and see what works for you. If you don't know anyone with guns, you can sometimes go to a gun-range and rent them. Some of the things to take into consideration are, the size, the caliber, automatic or revolver, etc.

The size of the gun is important if you're planning on carrying. You want something easy to conceal. The caliber is also important. You want to be able to take someone down with one shot, if necessary. I don't suggest carrying anything smaller than a .38 or 9mm, we in Jacksonville prefer the larger .45 ACP.

Revolvers are good as far as size and simplicity, but I wouldn't choose a revolver over an automatic. You have to get used to the heavy trigger pull of the revolver. Contrary to what you see on TV, it is unsafe to thumb-cock a revolver. You just pull the trigger all the way back and it pulls the hammer back and lets it go. I prefer a single-action. They have a lighter trigger press, which for me, promises better accuracy. Most importantly, just find what works best for you. Don't rule anything out just because it doesn't come naturally. It's best to familiarize your self with a variety of firearms. You don't want to be limited to handguns only, because you might find yourself in a situation where the only thing you have access to is a shotgun, a rifle or carbine.

Hey... You!

Why don't you go and read the four main safety rules again because... yes, they are that important!

When you think you're ready to carry a gun, ask yourself a few questions first;

1. Do you always follow all of the safety rules and handle all guns safely?

2. At the range, can you consistently make a group on your target the size of your hand at 5 yards? 10 yards? 15 yards?

3. Are you confident that you can actually use your gun to defend yourself or someone you care about?

4. Are you always alert and aware of your surroundings?

Women throughout history have been willing to suffer for the sake of fashion, from the days of corsets to high-heeled shoes. But most women will not adopt the proper dress to accommodate the concealed handgun. Baggy shirts and loose fitting pants may not be flattering but are much more practical. You will find it much more functional because not only will it conceal something that will save your life, but it will also make you appear less conspicuous. This will keep you from drawing unwanted attention to yourself.

The characteristics of self defense are reactive and not offensive. Since you do not have the advantage of deciding when or where these situations may arise, you must always be ready to react instantly. This means being prepared. Carrying a gun with an empty chamber is not preparedness. It is having a false sense of security or safety. This practice is naïve and unsafe. The gun is not a magical talisman. The gun, alone, will not ward off an attack. It must be ready, and you must be ready and willing to use it.

SOME SUGGESTED READING:

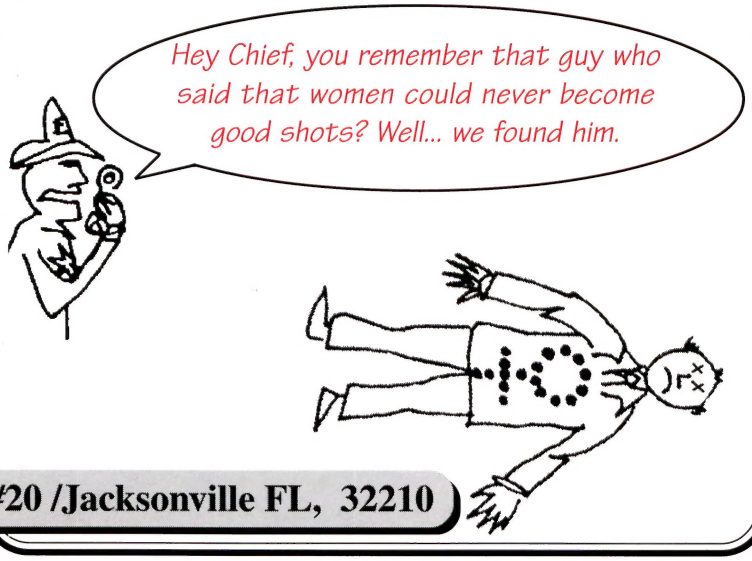
Effective Defense; The Woman, The Plan, The Gun
by Gila Maye-Hayes

The Principles of Personal Defense
by Jeff Cooper

The Truth About Self Defense
by Massad Ayoob

Condition Red- Handgun Tactics For Personal Protection
by Jacksonville ABC

"When women can't defend themselves, a society that perceives, trains, and treats women as victims and less equal members is created and perpetrated." **-Gila May-Hayes**



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